**Introduction to Yoga for Stress Relief**

In high school, I began practicing yoga to help me manage all of the stress I felt from balancing classes, extracurricular activities, working a part-time job and the pressures of applying to colleges. I was completely unaware that the years after high school and college contain even more stress. Luckily, yoga helps to keep me focused and able to manage my stress and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Because of this, I wanted to share my love of yoga with my class of future teachers, who will indubitably need stress relief in the years to come.

My lesson plan for teaching yoga includes a brief direct instruction lesson, during which I teach the class the basics of yoga and some of its many health benefits. During this time, students incorporate their prior knowledge by creating a KWL chart. To further activate prior knowledge, I provide a sentence structure on the board to conclude the “K” column of their chart, “When I hear the word yoga, I think of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” The students then share their thoughts aloud to the class, which not only incorporates the Common Core Standards to increase student writing, reading and academic speaking, but also follows the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), which I use to teach ESL students.

Including technology into my lesson plan, my Prezi teaches students an overview of basic yoga poses and their healthful benefits. Creating academic discussion, I ask students thought-provoking questions. After, I remind students that yoga is a discipline that focuses more on the practice than its results. This directly leads to our ten-minute yoga practice, where students learn yogic breathing, a vinyassa sequence, and two additional poses. During the final vinyasa sequence, I use my assessment rubric to grade students on their focus and determination to explore yoga. The lesson is closed with the students finishing their KWL chart and completing the sentence structure, “After that yoga practice, I feel \_\_\_\_\_.” Students share their feelings with the class and engage in more academic discussion.

This lesson plan includes direct instruction, critical thinking, deductive reasoning, academic discussion, and hands-on practice. Lesson plans should cater to students of different learning styles, which is why I tried to create a lesson plan appropriate for visual, kinesthetic, and auditory learners. I also wanted to make sure that English Language Learners and students with special needs would benefit from this practice.

After presenting this lesson to my class, I have concluded that it is essential that we have a space large enough for all students to participate. Even more important, it is essential that all students feel comfortable practicing yoga. Only two out of my seven students wanted to try the yoga poses. The rest expressed embarrassment towards exercising in front of peers. I had not expected this. I also did not want to force students to try something with which they feel uncomfortable, making this hard to grade and maintain full participation.

This project was good practice for teaching hands-on classes, which are often more difficult to grade than traditional math classes. In the future, I plan to keep my instructions more clear and concise and focus on the logistics of comfort, because students cannot learn if they do not feel comfortable enough to try. This could have been avoided with better planning, more space and warning the students in advance that next week they will be practicing yoga. All in all, however, the students enjoyed the practice and many seemed keen on trying yoga on their own, which was my ultimate goal!